

GENERAL NOTES

The data presented in this report show trends in doctorate awards by science and engineering (S&E) field and recipient characteristics, institutions awarding doctorates, and postgraduation plans of recipients. The source of the data is the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED).

The SED has been conducted annually for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and four other Federal agencies. Information from this survey becomes part of the Doctorate Records File, which is a census of recipients of research doctorates awarded since 1920 by regionally-accredited universities and colleges. Doctoral degrees such as the Ph.D. or D. Sc. are included in these surveys, but first-professional degrees such as the J.D. or M.D. are not.

Data for the SED are collected directly from the individual doctorate recipients. The questionnaire is distributed to them through the cooperation of the Graduate Deans to persons as they are completing their doctorate. The data for a given year include all doctorates awarded in the 12-month period ending on June 30 of that year.

These tables present detailed data on (S&E) doctorates recipients, with some totals provided for broad non-S&E fields. Detailed data on non-S&E fields are published in the Summary Report and by other Federal sponsors of the Survey of Earned Doctorates. The groupings of field specialties into broad fields may differ among the sponsoring agencies according to their missions.

Approximately 92 percent of the annual cohort of doctorate recipients in 1998 responded to the questionnaire. Over the decade, though, the response rate ranged from 93 percent in 1988, then increased to 95 percent in 1994, then declined to 92 percent in 1997. Note that most of the numbers presented are actual self-reports, as there are no adjustments for nonresponse. For the nonrespondents, partial data from public sources are added to the file for nonrespondents; therefore, complete counts are presented for conferred doctorates by field of study and sex of recipient. Because some tables present data subject to nonresponse, these summaries represent the conservative known responses for any data item. Therefore, small changes in numbers should be interpreted with caution, as numerical trends are affected by fluctuations in response rates and declines and increases may appear greater than they may be in reality.

For further information on the survey methodology or the availability of data on S&E doctorate recipients, please go to <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/ssed/sedmeth.htm> or contact—

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